



LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

75th Year

AUGUST 6 1976

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British China Policy 1933-37
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ROBERT BOARDMAN:
Britain and the People's Republic
of China 1949-1974
210pp. Macmillan. £10.

In the nineteenth century closer contacts with China and Japan gave rise to the "inscrutable" oriental. For the British policy-makers, neither country was easy to understand. Certainly they demanded special study, a need that was met by those known as "orientalists", men who steeped themselves in the language and culture and could be summoned for advice by the policy-makers in Whitehall.

This was still true of the period in the 1930s discussed in the studies by Ann Trotter and Stephen Lyon Endicott. George Sanson, then holding the appointment of commercial counsellor in the Tokyo embassy, was described by Sir John Simon, in an official document quoted by Miss Trotter in *Britain and East Asia 1933-1937*, as "one of the very best authorities on Japan".

A judgment promptly amended by Sir Robert Vansittart to "greatest living authority" on that country. In China there was the consular service as the training ground for specialists. It produced some remarkable men as well as some very odd ones. Mr Endicott in *Diplomacy and Enterprise* notes a report on this service covering the years 1912-37, by which time the quality of recruitment was falling off. Over that period eight had died of their wives, three killed themselves, four retired from ill health; three were certified and sent to asylums; four were involuntarily of the service; ten were compulsorily retired for reasons such as "eccentricity", or marriage to Chinese wives, or serious breakdowns and nine resigned.

Outside the ranks of orientalist—again, even in the 1930s—understanding of East Asia was fragmentary; incomprehension much more common. This comes through often enough from the official sources quoted by Miss Trotter and from the opinions of businessmen whose records have been diligently turned up by Mr Endicott.

The Far Eastern department of the Foreign Office was headed by a man with no experience of either China or Japan who had to be advised by Sir John Pratt, a consul of many years' service. But neither the department nor its ex-consular advisers carried much weight in the FO hierarchy, which perhaps helps to explain why Chamberlain at the Treasury was able to impose his own views on British policy on the then Foreign Secretary, Simon.

Both these books take as their starting-point the de facto settlement of Japan's acquisition of Manchuria as the vassal state of Manchukuo and end with the outbreak of fighting in North China that continued Japan's aggressive war. The puzzling question for British policy lay in the relative weight to be accorded to Japan and to China. In the 1930s, the recognition of the new government in Peking, the Japanese served British and French interests. After the Washington conference of 1921 it was dismissed and replaced by a new power approach towards China. By

then it was China, so slow to respond in the nineteenth century, that was changing. All through the 1920s the strong tide of Chinese nationalism had been on the make, and in 1928 the new government under Chiang Kai-shek offered the prospect of orderly international relations carried out by a new generation of officials who had studied in Western universities.

But how independent or united was China in 1933? Chiang Kai-shek's rule was certainly restricted. Moreover, Japan's tendency to impose its own solution on China had been signalled at least since the twenty-one demands of 1915. Then in 1931 came the takeover in Manchuria which the League of Nations was unable to stop and about which the Americans, though much disturbed, had shown themselves unwilling to do anything. The official documents quoted by Miss Trotter reveal that the British, so far from cooperating with American policy, always preferred to go their own way lest they should be let down by the inaction of a still isolationist United States. The Americans would always "leave Britain to bear the brunt of the action and the blame", it was testily noted in the Foreign Office.

Nevertheless, which was the best pivot on which policy could be founded—Japan or China? The ideal solution proposed was to keep on the right side of Japan without damaging British interests in China, trusting that the Japanese would stabilize China and that Britain could enjoy any benefits that accrued. This was an impossible task. Indeed, in 1934 a statement by the Japanese Foreign Office spokesman Amano warning of "peace and order being disturbed by international cooperation in assisting China" seemed to confirm the fears of those who said that Japan was staking a claim to imposing her own solution on China. As it was, the Japanese then probably now too—saw their relations with the Western world as one thing; their relations with China as quite another.

Both books bring out Chamberlain's—and the Treasury's—dominant role over the Foreign Office in policy-making and how it got into some detail over Sir Frederick Leith-Ross's mission to China and Japan. Chamberlain's fear was that Britain might embark on a policy that would be ingloriously exposed were Britain's total inability to back it with force to be revealed. The Chiefs of Staff were then insisting that the mounting threat of Hitler's Germany would absorb all Britain's

defensive capacity; East Asia thus imposed a policy of skilful manoeuvre.

In Chamberlain's view this meant friendship with Japan and frankly accepting their creation of Manchukuo. Miss Trotter brings out the dilemma and the readiness to believe, against the evidence, that the Japanese intrusion into China might be limited. Her analysis is lucid and her quotations from the official documents are aptly chosen. Mr Endicott however sees all the actors as imperialists and capitalists tending to behave in accordance with these stereotypes. Chamberlain was therefore the appender of a right-wing aggressive government, while the business lobby in China favoured Japan because what

counted for them was the profit from their investments and not a wise policy that would bring progress to China. He does not make a convincing case for the power of the China lobby over British policy, but he writes with vigour and has assembled much unpublished evidence.

During the 1930s sentiment felt for China in the America of Roosevelt and the New Deal was reaching a peak of hope and goodwill. But the flow of aid—universities, hospitals, missionaries, teachers, doctors, technicians of all kinds—won no official backing from a still isolationist America. Then, with a sudden switch, Pearl Harbor made the Americans wholehearted wartime allies of China.



Varahi, the female counterpart of the Boar incarnation of Vishnu, depicted in a woodcut. Nepal. Where the Gods Are Young (135pp) Weatherhill/Phaidon. \$29.95. Catalogues an American exhibition held last year and includes 97 photographs of examples of Nepali art, dating from the eighth to the nineteenth century.

The age of the warlords

By W. J. F. Jenner

JAMES E. SHERRIDAN:
China in Disintegration:
The Republic and the Chinese
History, 1912-1949
338pp. Collier-Macmillan. £8.

HUI-SIUNG CH'U:
Warlord Politics in China, 1916-1928
282pp. California: Stanford University Press. \$11.50.

It is very difficult to decide how to describe China for the past century. It is one to make a reader concerned, treating on those events conventionally regarded as important: the revolution of 1911, the May Fourth movement, the alliance between the Kuomintang and the Chinese and Soviet communists of the middle 1920s, and so on. These are the years of impact on which examinations are asked, and they give a book a straightforward structure. Such, for the most part, is the approach chosen by James E. Sheridan in *China in Disintegration*. Unusually, but not always, he guides his readers ably along the few well-worn paths across the vast and accurately mapped expanse of Chinese history during the first half of this century.

Were his book no more than that, one could simply commend it as a readable and competent guide to the sort of views of modern China

prevailing among American historians of the centre, while observing that the author has not really lost himself enough room in which to consider the "transitional upheavals of the twelve years from 1937 onwards during which first the war against Japan and then the civil war changed China utterly.

If these seem grudging commendations of a book for doing a useful job well, that is because it deserves higher praise for partly doing something more serious. A history of modern China can also bring home to its readers the poverty and wretchedness in which most Chinese lived, enabling young Americans to realize what it was that they were to wage each day for mere material gain. It is like them, feel the same, that the author's book is a history of the first half of this century, as Professor Sheridan rightly emphasizes; but they need to be given human significance if a reader who may not have much experience of China is to understand why the first half of this century led to such thoroughgoing changes in everybody's life. Professor Sheridan does not do this well enough.

Fortunately parts of the book do what a similar challenge. Professor Sheridan succeeds in bringing his history to life with a few of those legendary moments dealing with men who were once such major figures of popular Western imagination, and the sort of views of modern China

his chapters on the soldiers who between them decided the country's destiny during the first two or three decades of the Republic. He avoids woolly formulations and the playing of academic games to show how things actually happened. Here he is on home ground (his *Chinese Warlord*, a biography of Feng Yu-shiang, is one of the best monographs on Republican China available), and he inspires confidence as he tells us who they were and how they behaved, which generally differed from common banditry only in its scale. He is also aware of the values most of them lived by, and the traditions of heroism, ruthlessness and violence celebrated by the storyteller in the modern Western mind. Of course, it was by Confucian nationalism and revolutionary ideas that warlords tried to justify their actions; but their actions told otherwise.

Warlordism also gives Professor Sheridan an excellent lead into the politics of Chiang Kai-shek and the decade of Kuomintang rule before the Japanese war, and why Chiang was too complex a man to be categorized as just another warlord, his whole approach to power was essentially a warlord's one. Against other warlords Chiang showed himself to be a superior operator who started with only a small army but managed to win national supremacy; but he could not resist the far more modern Communist Party.

At last the full weight of national sentiment for China could be given expression. Yet in a few years the situation was again transformed when the new China of 1949 faced the world.

Now Britain found the pre-war situation reversed. American interest in China was tensely involved. Japan on the other hand was the defeated aggressor, unwilling to step outside the containment policy adopted by the American and British. The Korean War, it is true, as Robert Boardman's study *Britain and the People's Republic of China* brings out clearly, the Western decision about recognizing the People's Republic.

It proved to be much more of a burden than was foreseen in 1949, when the decision was made to recognize in the expectation that the United States would soon follow and that a British embassy in Peking would be a useful asset. In fact more than twenty years passed before a British ambassador was acknowledged by the Chinese, only a year indeed before the Nixon visit. Great Britain was left along the Great Wall to release the pent-up flood of general American sentiment for China reinforced by a left-wing younger generation.

Mr Boardman's account of British relations with China concentrates on particular points: the recognition question of 1949 and British reactions to it; the Sato treaty and the containment of China; the restrictions on trade; the Quemoy and Matsu crisis in 1954 and 1955 and British attempts at mediation in the first of these; and the final exchange of ambassadors when the Chinese renewed their contact with the world after the end of the cultural revolution and sought Western European allies against the Russians.

The evidence is well compiled, but no very weighty conclusions emerge. He does not attempt to probe any deeper, to ask why, for example, a Chinese threat against South-East Asia was thought in Britain to exist and to demand the Sato treaty. It was after all the assumption of China's expansionism that convinced Kennedy that he should commit American support to South Vietnam, since China, not North Vietnam, was seen as the real threat. New Sato is dead and the threat has been tacitly admitted as never having existed.

Yet in one sense the problem that exercised the policy-makers in the 1930s remains to affect the policies now and in the future. What were to be the relations between Japan and China, it was being asked in the 1930s. Forty years later that is still an unanswered question.

Looking on the subjective side

By Leszek Kolakowski

MARK POSTER:

Existential Marxism in Postwar France
From Sartre to Althusser
415pp. Princeton University Press.
£10.20.

This is a story of the strange marriage (very fecund in the author's opinion, not necessarily so in other people's) of French existential philosophy with French Marxism in the late 1950s and 1960s. Not surprisingly, the tale of Sartre's twisted love affair with communism and Marxism takes up a good deal of the book.

Compared with George Lichtschein's *Marxism in Modern France* (1966), Mark Poster's book is somewhat heavier and less readable, but also more informative and more solid. It is philosophically rather than politically oriented, even though the author's ideological allegiances appear in it clearly enough.

The book starts with a survey of Alexandre Kojève and Jean Hyppolite's contribution to the revival of Hegelianism in France. Both tried to trace in the *Phenomenology of Mind* everything that had helped to shape the Marxist philosophy of history.

Kojève, in particular, the concept of human self-creation in labour and the slave-master relationship. Hyppolite, Hegel's description of the self-alienating and self-negating movement of consciousness which reached its maturity as a collective and not as an individual achievement. Mr Poster asserts that future hybrids of Marxism and existentialism were prepared for by Hyppolite's stress on the Hegelian man who "is not what he is"; and this is possible *quasi facto*, he asserts, in fact the Hegelian concept of man being what he is was of Neoplatonic origin, and meant that human beings had failed so far to realize their essence—an idea entirely foreign to existential philosophy in Sartre's version in spite of some great similarity.

Next we get a concise review of the literature which, in the Stalinist period of French Marxism, kept alive the "humanist" tenets of the

young Marx (Lukács, Goldmann, Catholic critics), then an exposition of Sartre's early philosophy of freedom—incompatible, so the author argues, with any version of Marxism in so far as it implied that human relationships were essentially ones of intractable conflict and were based on one person's desire to make another person his own property. The Sartrean concept of man as the constructor of his own destiny, in the standard version of Marxism, could be and in fact would be, incorporated in the amended version, according to the author. Mr Poster recalls the communist attacks on Sartre in the 1940s and early 1950s and wants to be fair to Sartre: he believes that Sartre was right to attack the Marxists' inability to grasp "the subjective side" of human life, while the Marxists were right in denouncing him as an "atomized bourgeois who regarded dependence on others as a loss of freedom".

The second part of the book purports to show that these positions merged finally in the admirable synthetic truth of existential Marxism. We owe this achievement not to Sartre alone but also to the efforts of many critical Marxists, who tried to revise the ossified doctrine by injecting it with existential concepts. In particular, the writings of the "Arguments" group and Sartre's "Critique" of 1960 are discussed in detail.

From this point, if not quite conflictless, effort there emerged combined the virtues of both doctrines with none of their respective flaws: existential Marxism brought together "subjectivity" and "social interaction" and freedom and solidarity, spirit and body; it took over and elaborated the concept of radicalization which had underlain both the existential and the Marxist traditions and made it the instrument of attack on bureaucratic forms of life. And so existential Marxism became a philosophy of the hands of those who, in the 1960s, increasingly focused political issues on the anti-bureaucratic idea of workers' self-management, rather than on the traditional tenets of nineteenth-century Marxism. Mr Poster is that the students did not know exactly what they wanted but they were happy to share a feeling of brotherhood.

It is by no means certain that the subject of this book—existential Marxism—has ever existed or can

ever exist. Sartre's amorphous and verbose "Critique" notwithstanding, it is certainly the case that Marxist or half-Marxist tried to integrate a number of existential notions with Marxist theory, but it is not obvious that they succeeded in producing a synthesis. To be sure, the word "existentialism" has no commonly accepted definition, but in this case we must be satisfied with its Sartrean variant; and it is arguable that whatever remained from Sartre's early philosophy in "existential Marxism" was not specifically existentialist at all. What was specifically existentialist was the concept of the self as a pure negativity, or of a "temporality" generated entirely by the self, could not possibly be incorporated into any variant of Marxism unless one or other of these terms (existentialism or Marxism) was first emptied of its historically defined meaning.

To the critics who (like Raymond Aron) have argued for the incompatibility of these two philosophical proposals the author responds: "These critics pre-supposed that thought had to be a single, unified

In many passages Mr Poster shows that he has assimilated completely the pretentious jargon of Sartre-Marxism. This is how he tells the story through the May 1968 events: "the students' radicalization, the practical field in the new situation, without resorting to determinism, reductionism and irrationalism. . . . The individual is the situation pre-reflectively projected himself through the other, and then from the mutuality of projects, from the 'existential quality of the group-in-fusion, intellectual representations of the group's consciousness emerged.' . . . What he is trying to say, at a guess, is that the students did not know exactly what they wanted but they were happy to share a feeling of brotherhood."

It is by no means certain that the subject of this book—existential Marxism—has ever existed or can

Strictly unnecessary

By John Sturrock

GEORGES BATAILLE:
Oeuvres complètes
Volume 7
619pp. Paris: Gallimard. 92fr.

The chief pleasure of Volume 7 of Georges Bataille's *Oeuvres complètes* is his surprising "Essai d'économie générale" or *La part maudite*, which was first published in 1949 and makes as good a summary as any of his more distinctive ideas. "Général" is right, this is Bataille's speculation, an essay in support of luxury, conspicuous waste and a cosmos with far more energy than it needs simply to survive. Bataille was fascinated by excess and by how different societies in the past and present have set about relieving themselves of their vital surplus. He chose to identify the superfluous with the sacred; if only, one often gets the sense of the inclination to do the opposite, to look on waste as sinful and on endless accumulation as the supreme good.

The real hero of *La part maudite* is the Sun, which dispenses its heat without hope of requital. This thermal largesse puts it in a different class, ethically from all we grub and calve, prospering in its anything, be it strength or money, without some prospect of a return. Bataille, inspired by the sun, like other French writers of his generation, what the anthropologists Marcel Mauss has to say about the North American potlatch in his *Essai sur le don*, was strongly in favour of generosity to any extent, waste of resources which comes as an

system without internal contradictions, fissures, gaps or breaches." To which one may reply that once we have so much revolutionary traffic, we are certainly capable of combining everything with anything, and do not even need to prove that this or that specific combination is possible.

Sartre's philosophy certainly played an important role in shaping the minds of those who, in the early post-Stalinist period, tried to raise Marxism from its torpor and primitivism. Yet among those who did so try in the late 1950s, whether in France or elsewhere, very few could now be called Marxists in any recognizable sense. "Existential Marxism" seems to have been a transitory formation, rather than a living, promising trend. To confess all this today is rather like saying that one wants to live like a Parthian or a Roman, or a communist of the late 1950s.

It would be unfair, however, to judge this book by its author's own ideological commitments. It provides us with a reliable, substantial and scrupulous picture of a philosophical phenomenon well worth study and which only a few people could afford to study thoroughly from the primary sources.

insult to the prevalent utilitarianism (he would probably be celebrating the Concorde if he were still alive today).

The virtue of waste is to restore a lost "harmony" to individual and collective life, an anxious but ultimately bracing state which we can never enjoy so long as we treat one another coldly and distrustfully. Bataille, nothing if not Nietzschean, sees all of us as frustrated laughers, dancers and makers of whoopee, and laments that if we organized our societies less costively we might go laughing and dancing, in beautiful anguish, all the way to the grave.

Some people, however, faced with the alternative societies which Bataille has mostly in mind, may prefer the comforts of thinhood to the thrills of this lost intimacy. For in *La part maudite*, Bataille returns again to his most favoured nation, the Aztecs, those great spendthrifts of human life. According to Bataille the victims of Aztec human sacrifices were more to be envied than regretted, because the obsidian knife, as it fell, mysteriously restored them to the full in wardness and humanity which they could never have hoped for had they remained, merely as cogs in the social machine.

The literary left in France is still very fond of Bataille, perhaps because he is so perfectly and guiltlessly impractical. But as this collected edition accumulates (and would Bataille himself have liked this idea or not?), the sameness of his books, and their loss of most of the literary graces, begin to work against him. Apart from the canonical and other texts of *La part maudite*, this seventh volume contains the thin and repetitive *Theoria de la religion* (first published in 1947) and the transcripts of a number of lectures given by Bataille in 1947-48, on Sade, Surrealism and religion again.

Altogether she was a remarkable woman of whom, thanks to the diligence of Messrs. Chapple and Pollard, one can form an exceptionally clear and detailed picture. So wrote Malcolm Muggeridge in the Observer when *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell* first appeared. Ten years later the book still commands great interest. Margaret Lane in *The Daily Telegraph* draws attention to Mrs Gaskell's "irresistible letters. . . the huge Chapple and Pollard edition which appeared ten years ago and revealed her as one of the most delightful women of all time". A collection of all the letters available written by Elizabeth Gaskell between 1832 and 1865 and arranged chronologically, the book extends some 1,000 pages. Far from being a formal letter writer, Mrs Gaskell's pen flowed with a spontaneity of style that made her delightful reading: her subjects range from day-to-day family affairs to literature, travel abroad, current events and progress on her own novels, and apart from family and publisher, among her correspondents were some of the leading literary figures of the day—Elizabeth Barrett Browning, for example, John Ruskin and Leigh Hunt. Letters concerning her friendship with Charles Brons are especially illuminating. The editors provide a full introduction, and appendices give biographical sketches of many of the correspondents to whom she wrote.

"THE LETTERS OF MRS GASKELL" Edited by J. A. V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard.
£6.00 pp.

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY PRESS

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By Peter Levi

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Life in the frontier zone

By J. A. Lloyd

JOYCE REYNOLDS (Editor):
Libyan Studies
Select papers of the late R. G. Goodchild
345pp. Elek. £17.50.

Synonymous with the classical archaeology of Libya in the post-war period, until his premature death in 1965, Richard Goodchild. *Libyan Studies* brings together for the first time a generous selection of Goodchild's Libyan papers, which previously lay scattered in a variety of learned journals. Seventeen published articles, some valuable formerly unpublished material and, sensibly, a complete bibliography of his work are included. Joyce Reynolds, one of Goodchild's most distinguished colleagues, has undertaken the considerable editorial responsibility most capably. Her careful and unobtrusive annotation alerts the reader to all the significant developments which have affected Goodchild's papers in the quarter-century since they first appeared.

Richard Goodchild was born in 1918, near Exeter. He first dug as a schoolboy and his enthusiasm was encouraged at Oxford, where he read Modern History. Here his collaboration in the publication and excavation of an important Iron Age sanctuary at Frilford was the most fruitful expression of his constant involvement with archaeology. War

service introduced him to the Mediterranean and thereafter he was to spend most of his working life in Libya. After leaving Libya in 1966 he spent a year in the United States before taking up an appointment as professor of the archaeology of the Roman provinces at the London Institute of Archaeology. His career as an academic was short, for he fell ill after his first term and soon died.

When Goodchild took office in Libya, first in 1946 and later in 1953 as Controller for Cyrene, he came to a vast land over three times the size of France. Arid, sparsely populated and then extremely poor (before oil) Libya had nevertheless an immensely rich and well-preserved archaeological heritage. The war had left the antiquities unprotected in the hands of the local population and the task of rebuilding and improving the administration, as well as continuing archaeological research, was one of great magnitude. Goodchild's unselfish approach to the problem is indicated by this message from "A Hole in the Heavens" chapters from an unfinished book on the recent history of Cyrene:

Moreover, a foreigner employed in a newly-emergent country must consider his main responsibility to be that of creating something that will endure after his going. Indeed it may be said that the sooner he can make adequate preparations for his own departure, the better he is doing his job.

When he came to leave Libya, Goodchild had helped to organize a viable, locally staffed antiquities service, a new and substantial jour-

nal *Libyan Antiquary* and the widespread participation and involvement of scholars of many different nationalities. It says much for his humanity, energy and ability that in Libya today his memory is held in the greatest esteem.

"A Hole in the Heavens" is a highly entertaining, informative account of the rediscovery and history of the site of Cyrene, which has wisely been judged too important to remain unpublished. Drawing on a wealth of obscure sources, Goodchild begins the story in the early eighteenth century with the Journey of Lemire, the French consul at Tripoli, to the ruins of the "great and proud city". Visits by other European travellers are related and some of their idiosyncratic interpretations are amusingly analysed. Lemire claimed to have seen a "chump de Mars" containing the tombs of 25,000 soldiers laid out in battle formation, each grave marked by an upright stone whose height varied according to rank. Goodchild gently corrects him: "It is evident that the consul had mistaken for funerary monuments the standing stones which the ancients had set up to mark out their fields and fencible areas."

He goes on to describe the history of concentrated excavation at Cyrene. In 1861 the British naval officers Smith and Porcher loaded a man-of-war with more than 100 sculptures from the ruins. In 1911 the American expedition was curtailed by the outbreak of the First World War. The French, under the leadership of Herbert Fletcher De Cou, shortly afterwards the Italian seizure of Libya took place and the

severely of Cyrene was broken by the hustle and bustle of military occupation. It was at this time that the famous "Venus of Cyrene" was found. The search for the missing head of this statue, modestly sponsored by the Ministry for the Colonies, was in fact the starting-point of more than thirty years of Italian governmental excavation at Cyrene.

The story is continued to the end of the Second World War but breaks off shortly afterwards. It is a witty and fluently written account, demonstrating not only Goodchild's love of Cyrene and his painstaking powers of research but also his patience and his charitable approach, virtues which equipped him well for the Libyan experience. The missing section up to his departure has to some extent been filled by the posthumous publication of his book *Cyrene and Apollonia* (Zurich, 1971).

The bulk of *Libyan Studies* is, of course, taken up by the fruits of Goodchild's archaeological work. His major preoccupation, Roman archaeology. Perhaps the most important and best known of the selected papers are those on the Roman frontier (*Libyae*) in Tripolitania. He illustrates his abiding interest in the organization of Roman frontier defences and life in the frontier zone. The seven studies will remain important for the vivid picture which they create of the Tripolitanian hinterland, stuffed with the black-sheep-like, fortified towns which formed the backbone of a zonal system of frontier defence initiated in the third century AD. The editor draws attention to the continuing debate over the correct description, *limes* or *frontier*, of the frontier-line which was settled in the desert and called upon by the Romans to protect the great coastal cities from barbarian attack.

His study of the Severan fortresses at Bu Njem, Gharia el-Gharbia and Ghadames, built by detachments of Legio III Augusta to guard the desert oases and caravan routes, remains the best general survey of these buildings. Intensive excavation in progress at Bu Njem, however, will provide detailed information on these forts at the edge of the empire for the first time.

Moving eastwards, Goodchild made the initial assessment of the basic defensive arrangements in Cyrenaica, from Roman times through to the Arab invasions. His striking portrayal of Cyrenaica in the sixth century—"The whole province of Libya Pentapolis had become, by the reign of Justinian, a land of castles, and almost every hilltop was fortified in the form of a tower in visual communication with several of other towers"—has yet to be

challenged, for the excavation which he recognized as essential for the dating of these buildings has sadly not been attempted.

The military theme continued to influence the more reflective work of his later career. His thoughts tended to dwell on a consideration of specific events from the history of the Libyan history. A fragmentary, on Sisyphus of Cyrene, the "Squire-Bishop" of late antiquity, gives rise to some conclusions. The final study in this book looks at the campaigns of the Arab general, Amir Ibn al-As, who led the seventh century AD. Later work has corrected some of the details (notably stressing that Toza was not a city but a fortified post) but as much for his guarantee of supply as its strategic position, the major outlines, as with so much of Goodchild's work, remain undisputed.

The topographical survey of Goodchild's outstanding contribution to Libyan archaeology. His major studies included the detailed and powerful analysis of buildings like the unfinished "Imperial" baths at Lepis Magna and a gift for a local ruler (which resulted in the minimum of excavation, the location of the Forum at Ptolemais, in Cyrenaica). For his, however, the major, unexplored fields of research held the widest appeal. Consequently his pioneer surveys in country areas have helped to address the needs of archaeologists placed on the investigation of the classical cities of Libya, and have considerably broadened our knowledge of the country as a whole. The two Libyan sheets of the *Tubus Imperialis*, as well as many of the papers included here, are the practical results of his flair for field work.

In recent years Goodchild's initial reconnaissance have been followed up, both in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, where the identification of Drina as Hadrianopolis, the "lost" city of the Hexapolis, has been established. Goodchild himself wavered between Drina and Tansuluch as the site of the Hadrianic foundation, although in a paper on the fishing of Cyrene and the rise of Ptolemais he appeared to favour Drina. Further research will undoubtedly supplement and refine the majority of these papers. They remain, however, fundamental working documents for the archaeologist and the historian alike, and will do so for many years. *Libyan Studies* is a testament to a considerable archaeological, and to a man who by his deep affection and respect for a country, its people and its antiquities left a legacy of good work which will be a source of inspiration and deeply indebted.

Imperial highways

By Barry Cunliffe

RAYMOND CHEVALLIER:
Roman Roads
Translated by N. H. Field
272pp. Batsford. £9.50.

Although in Britain we are fortunate to have full published accounts of our Roman road system, there has until now been no up-to-date work discussing Roman roads in their broader context, broader, that is, both geographically and in terms of their functions and their development. Raymond Chevallier's book is a most welcome addition to the literature.

Written in a slightly idiosyncratic Gallic style, and naturally biased towards French examples, M. Chevallier provides an extremely valuable account of all aspects of the Imperial road system. In its general approach the book is semi-encyclopaedic. It is particularly true of the first chapter, which deals with the evidence for roads derived from classical literature and inscriptions. First Latin words for roads are discussed, and then follow several pages of extracts from classical texts, detailed discussions of contemporary sources such as the Ptolemaic Table and the Antonine Itinerary, transcriptions from a number of Roman milestones and even a consideration of the archaeological evidence of the Roman road system. None of this is particularly new reading,

but it provides a mass of fascinating information.

The second chapter, dealing with the archaeology of roads and the ancillary structures, is more integrated, though the section gives practical advice on looking for roads might cause some confusion and even misunderstanding, in the minds of those not already familiar with the techniques of British field archaeology.

In the third chapter the author provides a useful summary of the road systems in the Roman provinces. The treatment is uneven, almost half of the chapter being devoted to France and Italy, while the eastern provinces, including Greece, are dismissed in a few paragraphs. Admittedly this is to some extent reflects our lack of knowledge of eastern Europe and the Balkans, but there is much of significance in Hungary and Yugoslavia, which could have been brought out.

This final chapter dealing with life on the roads and the functions of roads are the most interesting. It deals with the communication roads, the public and private, and a number of other aspects, are carefully considered. The light of contemporary life is thrown on the Roman road system. Here M. Chevallier is at his most skilfully blending his knowledge of sources of evidence to provide a lively and informative whole. Particular value is a thirty-page bibliography divided into a number of sections, broadly representing the different aspects of the book. For this, M. Chevallier and the general reader will be very much in the author's debt.

RELIGION

Courteous disharmony

By Ulrich Simon

Christian Believing
A Report by the Doctrine Commission of the Church of England.
156pp. SPCK. £2.50.

Most reports of our time cannot help being boring. The compilers have to give a picture of the state of play to date. But Christian doctrine is unlike North Sea oil, and time is unlike North Sea oil, and the "Report by the Doctrine Commission of the Church of England" cannot pursue a clear and practical aim. It oscillates between facts in the past, present uncertainties in the future. The committee pinpoints the problems of the "pastness of the past" and of the "nature of religious language" as most appropriate for discussion.

For unless theological methods are scrutinized the Bible may be abused at random, and credal formulas may be invoked irrationally. Nothing can be taken for granted if we wish to face and state the truth in accord with contemporary knowledge and follow an open-ended approach to the Christ-heredity, without bias or reserve. Yet Christian identity cannot hope to survive without its central core of tradition. Despite the squeeze, this Anglican inquiry comes a little closer to an informed public. It demolishes the kind of humbug so often associated with faith, as if the Name or the Person could be produced as a trump card to take all the tricks on the table. Fundamentalists, pietists, as well as agnostics and humanists, may profit from this survey and evaluation of first-century writings, which testify to an incredibly complex world and an even more complex articulation.

More surprisingly, the members of the Doctrine Commission not only shun the declared upon Christian belief from outside, but also the huge wave of apostasy

within Christendom. This is a pity, for it gives an air of anarchy to the no-man's-land behind the cool academic treatment which assumes the existence of a free Christian community, an educated class of Christians, amenable churches, and responsible individuals. Hence the report is certainly free from the apocalyptic fervour of Solzhenitsyn or the nihilism of Uspokoy. Its presuppositions fail to comprehend the godless alienating, with horse-men bringing famine, pestilence, war, and death. Is the past now so muted that the forms of Christian belief, say in denunciations, lamentations, and victory songs, can no longer be heard by committees locked up in their little electronic cages?

A sense of frustration runs through the report's "agreed statement" despite or because of the somewhat romantic language which compares the Christian life to "an odyssey, a voyage of discovery, a journey." This makes the pilgrim and his goal provisional. Instead a minority report, additional appendices and individual essays offer no judgment, but the sufferings of the Jews and the triumph of Islam speak for themselves.

C. P. Evans's essay on the unity and the pluriformity of the New Testament is a fine example of expertise distilled for the uninitiated public. It demolishes the kind of humbug so often associated with faith, as if the Name or the Person could be produced as a trump card to take all the tricks on the table. Fundamentalists, pietists, as well as agnostics and humanists, may profit from this survey and evaluation of first-century writings, which testify to an incredibly complex world and an even more complex articulation.

of faith. No doubt our present awareness of complexities and the pluralism which governs our lives have helped to trigger off the disclosure of this self-evident truth, which must enrich our apprehension of Gospels and Epistles. But, at the same time, the many dimensions of Christianity focus sharply on the dogmatic questions surrounding the status of the Christ: who was and is he and what did he achieve? How can the many facets point to the One?

G. W. H. Lampe rehearses the ensuing dogmatic struggles. From the start theologians fought against the dialectical sparring which once shook the world and made a civilization. Christians too, can do worse than to remember that the creeds were polemical in essence. A clause like the *filioque*, which finally split East and West, really matters (and perhaps still does). Ideology fuelled expansion and wars. Professor Lampe offers no judgment, but the sufferings of the Jews and the triumph of Islam speak for themselves.

Anglican doctrine, however, only touches on this side of dogmatics as if it were an alien thing best forgotten. The individual essays are more concerned with the chaos which always separated the alleged divine revelation from historical events. They do not wish to perpetuate the bitterness of past polemics with its sweat and stink of Eliot, Loisy, or Harnack, and even the impact of modern science does not lessen the obsession with historical criticism.

A. M. Allchin presents the case for the tradition and orthodoxy in

trouble over the status, the validity of tradition and the essential cultures in which it is embedded. In this regard, the Church's dogmatics, but natural theology lies like a mine-field in and around so much Anglican thinking. How can the eternal be compared with the temporal, the infinite in the spatial, the cosmic in history on earth, God in Man? Can the traditional formulations be now reduced to the lowly status of symbol or parable and still assert anything meaningful? Radical and conservative protagonists give their answers, now without the odium of the offensive past.

D. E. Nineham hits at the unreliability of all reporting. When tested by our rules of evidence the historical content of Old and New Testaments is open in doubt of varying degree. Moreover, since all events are already interpreted through and for the cultural climate of the age, the inherited material behind dogma must be seen to be of an opaque nature. Nothing is really what it seems to have been—including the Jesus of the Gospels. The report looks like the old dish served up with new sauce, but if all its nuances are allowed to make for a nice cacophony, and that may perhaps be the voice of truth in an age of chaos. Such optimism, however, may be totally misplaced unless Christians find the courage to add their own ecclesiastical, despairing, unacademic music to this artificial concert. The days of reasonable reporting have been overtaken by events, and a theology of crisis, defiance, prophecy, and apocalyptic fury on the one hand, and of a scientific, cosmic, transcendent inspiration on the other, answers to our present needs. Perhaps more words and propositions are no longer adequate to the task. One longs for poetry, music, and icons after reading this report. And for action rather than talk!

As can be seen, the report ends on a fascinating note, for it broadens irreconcilable voices in courteous disharmony. It is surely a cause for wonder that seventeen theologians, taken from a tiny country and similar cultural background, can produce such a chorus. At the report looks like the old dish served up with new sauce, but if all its nuances are allowed to make for a nice cacophony, and that may perhaps be the voice of truth in an age of chaos. Such optimism, however, may be totally misplaced unless Christians find the courage to add their own ecclesiastical, despairing, unacademic music to this artificial concert. The days of reasonable reporting have been overtaken by events, and a theology of crisis, defiance, prophecy, and apocalyptic fury on the one hand, and of a scientific, cosmic, transcendent inspiration on the other, answers to our present needs. Perhaps more words and propositions are no longer adequate to the task. One longs for poetry, music, and icons after reading this report. And for action rather than talk!

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The heavens and men's eyes

By Gordon R. Willey

ANTHONY F. Aveni (Editor):
Archaeoastronomy in Pre-Columbian America
486pp. University of Texas Press (AUPG). £11.60.

There has been a good bit of non-sense written about the astronomical performances of the ancients. Indeed, what is designated as "archaeoastronomy" in Anthony Aveni's book was for a long time held in rather low repute by professional archaeologists. As a student in the late 1950s I well recall a distinguished professor referring to the study of the alignments of man-made features and celestial bodies as "the lowest form of archaeological research". Fortunately in the past decade or so things have changed, and the quality of astro-archaeological work and the attitudes towards it.

Archaeoastronomy in Pre-Columbian America exemplifies this new seriousness. The book grew from a conference which was held under the joint sponsorship of the Mexican Consejo Nacional de Ciencias y Tecnología and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, in Mexico City in June 1973. All of the papers are technical or specialized, some highly so. The covering, namely of archaeoastronomy, is astoundingly correct in the sense that it refers to the intersection and overlap of archaeological and astronomical interests, but it should be pointed out that the interests, scholarly data and approaches are extremely diverse, as the bibliography in astronomy is about as sprawling as archaeology.

One set of papers is concerned with Mayan and other Mesoamerican calendars, and their related astronomical aspects. The data for these are found in the famous Mayan document, the Dresden Codex. My above observations about the former dubiousness of "archaeoastronomy" do not apply to this particular research tradition. The richness and complexity of the data for such studies can be appreciated from M. D. Coe's overview of the subject, and the quality of the studies of this genre are well represented by the several offerings of N. K.

Owen, C. H. Smiley, D. H. Kelley, C. Cook de Leonard, and M. Hatch. Some of these discuss the recordings of solar eclipses in the Dresden Codex and the bearing that such information has on the problems of the Mayan-Christian calendrical correlation. Others examine astronomical information on carved monuments or refer to other codices. The place by Cook de Leonard is a tour de force of interpretation of series of wall panels from the site of Teotihuacan, utilizing astronomical and deity symbols and their meanings in an erudite display of iconographic explanation.

Another group of papers stands in marked contrast to the first. These are about the evidence of astronomical knowledge among the native peoples of America north of Mexico, particularly in the southwestern United States. Many of these data are petroglyphs which are presumed to refer to various astronomical recordings of special interest is one sign which has been interpreted as the supernova, Crab Nebula, a phenomenon which was noted by Sung dynasty astronomers in AD 1054 and which is believed to have been sighted by the prehistoric Southwesterners. Other petroglyphs on the ceilings of cliff-face overhangs are interpreted as "planetary sites". Some astronomical data are also seen in architectural orientations, such as the doorways set to catch solstitial rays.

Inevitably, these papers are much more speculative than those of the first group. Their contexts are much thinner. Only the kind of ethno-historical and ethnographic background material which Hawley fills in his article backs up the astronomical traditions of the Pueblo Indians, and other Southwesterners. In contrast to the first group, the data are extremely diverse, as the bibliography in astronomy is about as sprawling as archaeology.

The third group of papers is largely concerned with Mesoamerican data and with site layout and astronomical aspects. The data for these are found in the famous Mayan document, the Dresden Codex. My above observations about the former dubiousness of "archaeoastronomy" do not apply to this particular research tradition. The richness and complexity of the data for such studies can be appreciated from M. D. Coe's overview of the subject, and the quality of the studies of this genre are well represented by the several offerings of N. K.

building under examination by means other than astronomical ones so that circularity of reasoning can be avoided. Substantively, he discusses astronomical observations at San Diego, Kamak, and on the south coast of Peru. In the latter instance, the case for the astronomical significance of the ground lines near Nasca was not demonstrated.

A. F. Aveni and J. E. Keyman also combine their examinations of structures and sites—these all in Mesoamerica—with methodological concerns. The latter argues that substance adaptive factors for any society may be related to its celestial observations and that the archaeoastronomer should therefore take cognizance of the ecological context of his data. No one could deny this, yet in Egypt or in Mesoamerica the validations and dedications of rulers or the reinforcement of religious authority probably had more to do with astronomical architectural alignments than did concerns with crops and climate.

T. M. Cowan's paper, which is not Mesoamerican but about architecture, attempts to relate eastern United States effigy mound configurations with stellar configurations. In this his efforts are something like those of the south-western Ceremonial petroglyphic schools, and, to my mind, no more convincing.

A. Marshack examines a Mesoamerican archaeological object—an Olmec Mosaic pendant—and sees in the arrangement of its plaques the layout of a lunar year calendar. He is probably right because in this case, Olmec prototypes for Mayan and other later Mesoamerican calendars are very likely. In other words, his argument really rests on evidence of historical context. Without this I would not be any more convinced than I am by Cowan's argument about the Olmec calendar. All in all, I think that the collection indicates that there is a respectable interdisciplinary field that might be called "archaeoastronomy", that this field is still young, and that it is still awkward and uncertain of itself in many instances. Like other interdisciplinary efforts, it makes severe demands on its practitioners. Good performance demands some real knowledge of astronomy and considerable knowledge of the archaeological setting to be studied. As one sympathetic archaeologist, I do not deny that much can be inferred from "unwritten evidence" alone, and this is certainly true for "archaeoastronomy"; yet here, too, the more we can establish with documentary, ethnographic, and ethno-historical evidence, the more comfortable we will be in our interpretations.

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Only believe

By F. R. Barry

ELIZABETH MACLAREN:
The Nature of Belief
176pp. Sheldon Press. £1.60.
PETER DONOVAN:
Religious Language
133pp. Sheldon Press. £1.60.

In these two books the new Issues in Religious Studies series gets off a hopeful start. If subsequent titles match up to these it should fill its intention. Elizabeth MacLaren, who is not a theologian, was, to be fair, as dispassionate as possible—how dispassionate, we may ask, is that?—assuming a serious interest on the part of the reader, but neither previous study in the field nor commitment to any religious position. Elizabeth MacLaren and Peter Donovan's books inevitably overlap, for religious questions can hardly ever be isolated. Indeed, one of the aims of these two writers is to exhibit their complex interconnection, not least with that "second order" questions which may be what is really being argued about, rather than the ostensible disagreements.

This appears at once in *The Nature of Belief*. Is belief, as the Queen told Alice, training oneself to believe impossible things? If so, what is intended by "believe"? Does it mean logically contradictory, or is it a religiously unbelievable *per se*? Or does it imply a man may say that a job is impossible? Again, is belief that you can do for half an hour, and then stop? Is it a mental and spiritual attitude? Is it the content of what is believed? In any case, what is the ground for believing?

It is explored in trenchant form. Scientists and theologians are called to state the case for a "naturalistic" that is, a "nothing-but" reduction of interpretation of nature and man. It may now be necessary to ask God in "but are we obliged to rule him out? The world and man's life within it are not made sense only of in relation to God who is the ground of all being. Surely this is just that.

theologians, there is no doubt that what most believers mean in their public or private professions of belief is that they are making affirmations about supernatural realities, which—as many would add—remain true whether or not anyone believes them. Belief in presupposes belief that if the propositional element in faith is muted, it can hardly go on claiming to be true. But how can Christians about the Infinite ever be expressed in finite human speech? And in what sense, if any, can they claim to be true?

Dr Donovan tackles this in *Religious Language*. That term, he starts by laying it down, refers not to a "sacred" language like Hebrew, or to specialized theological words, but to any language, even the most ordinary, when it is used in a religious context. It is bound to be "odd", analogical and oblique for it is not referring to straight empirical facts, but can it convey any genuine philosophical information? Indeed, our linguistic philosophers are asking whether it even means anything at all. Anthony Flew has maintained that all statements about God are exposed to the death by a thousand qualifications and are, for all practical purposes, to be vacuous and meaningless.

Is religious language essentially non-factual? Though they convey no factual information may not the stories told by the religions—whether in themselves true or false—support certain principles of right living? (R. B. Braithwaite, R. M. Hare, Paul van Buren). Surely what makes a valid guide to life more than they are, or are believed to be, true. Are there any empirical tests that can be applied either to this life or in a life to come? Two chapters are devoted to this question—on the evidence of "religious experience" and on John Hick's "epistemological verification". They suggest, too, a criticism of Ian Ramsey. When the penny drops, the symbol becomes evocative. Did he ever establish that it may be informative?

If we study religious language where it is used—that is, by people who are engaged in worship—not merely talked about, as in senior common rooms, we shall find it employed in a number of different ways—prayer and praise, penitence, exhortation, "remembering" events on which faith was founded—which are not factual statements, in the indicative but may yet be conveying genuine information about the unseen: realities of religion.

Now is the time

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